

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Mikveh Warshaw, and I am from New Haven, CT. I work at a FQHC in Connecticut as a psychiatric nurse practitioner

I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

As a psychiatric nurse practitioner at CHC, Inc in Meriden and New Britain I work with many youth experiencing mental health crises. While the clinic I work at tries to make access to people without documents I regularly have patients who are not able to continue care with me due to costs.

It is unfair to the children, their families, and the schools. By providing coverage for children and adolescents it not only will allow me to better do my job of caring for the emotional wellbeing of children in need, but it will take the pressure off school personnel to be the only resource available for many of our youth without health care.

As a provider that works with patients across the lifespan I know the importance of having access to mental health care at a young age. If we are able to start providing good and consistent care to youth while they are children and adolescents we are much more likely to decrease more serious outcomes later in life, such as suicide, substance use disorders, chronic debilitating depressions and anxieties. Connecticut is currently working to prioritize the needs of mental health for children, well if that is the case then we MUST include ALL of our children, documented or not.

When my patients do not have health insurance I see what happens. They end up in ERs for panic attacks, for major depression, for trauma. All conditions that ERs are not suited to handle and that end up costing much more than would be an office visit with myself or a colleague. This is true for children and adults regardless. Providing access to health care to ALL is the just thing, the smart thing, and the healthy thing to do!

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,
Mikveh Warshaw RN, MSN, PMHNP-BC, CARN-AP